

Viewpoint was first published in 1948, when Rev. Alex Cran was the Vicar and the parish was Congresbury with Wick St. Lawrence. This editorial was published in August 1948

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EDITORIAL.

The first distribution of the magazine has, inevitably, been slow, but subsequent months should see a more speedy delivery. We are grateful for the welcome with which the village has received the new monthly. Its establishment as a permanent feature seems assured.

I have now, as your vicar, had some time to survey and think about the church situation at Congresbury. As I see it there are four main tasks before us. We have to make our church a family, in fact and deed, by binding ourselves together in fellow-ship with our Lord. These are no idle words. Unity in God's family is the great need of the hour. We have our part to play in Congresbury. This is no time for cliques or groups to divide us. Secondly, we have to express our fellowship in Christ towards the village, by helping and serving every good cause whenever we can. Further, we have to carry out speedily work of restoration to our churches at Congresbury and Wick. Lastly, we have to get together a fund to preserve the vicarage and its grounds for the future. These, so it seems to me, are our tasks. The carrying out of them must involve us in many different activities. It is important, however, that we do not separate these tasks into spiritual and material. They are fourfold, yet one in dependence upon a living fellowship that is the expression of our loyalty to Christ. Let all start and end in our family worship in God's house. Let us do what we have to do from that centre and motive, for our four tasks are for the glory of God.

When are we going to begin? Now. There is one obvious duty, namely, the building up of our morning services. There may be many reasons why Sunday morning worship is difficult, but surely they are not insurmountable. Can we not do better? Can you not, reader, so arrange your affairs as to come?

It is, also, essential that our church life should have proper social expression; and so we hope to have a Garden Party at the vicarage on Saturday, September 11th. There will be the usual stalls, side-shows and entertainments; all to raise funds, but, above all, we shall have the opportunity of meeting together. The garden is not what we could wish it to be, but you will all be welcome. From your knowledge of such events in the past and of the capabilities of our workers, you can look forward to a very enjoyable afternoon.

I have an acknowledgment to make. Soon after my arrival in Congresbury, I had to go to Uphill. I found Weston and began to search round and about the highlands of Kewstoke and Worle. It is, therefore, obvious that I owe much to the kindness of Mr. Cavill of Congresbury, and Mr. Quick of Wick, for guidance about a parish where street names and numbers are not prominently displayed.

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THE CHURCH SERVICES (II).

If you open your Prayer Book where it opens most easily, you will find the service of Holy Communion. It is by design and not by accident that this service is at the centre of the Book of Common Prayer. Other services are of man's devising; this is the fulfilment of our Lord's command: "Do this in remembrance of me." The Prayer Book clearly assumes that Holy Communion will be the main Sunday service. Morning and Evening Prayer are the daily services of family prayer, but for the Lord's Day the Lord's Own Service has place of honour.

Many people think there are two classes of Christians: those who take Communion and those who don't. Often you hear it said: "I am not good enough to go to Communion." The Prayer Book of our church knows nothing of such an attitude. It assumes that all Christians will have their places at the Lord's Table. John Wesley wrote in a sermon on "The Duty of Constant Communion": "No man can have any pretence to Christian piety who does not receive it, not once a month, but as often as he can." There is no question of standards of goodness or worthiness. The service is not for 'good people'; it is for 'all sorts and conditions of men'—to help them to get better. They get better by making goodness God-centred and not self-centred.

Of all the services in the Prayer Book Holy Communion is the easiest to understand. A child by watching what goes on can readily say: "People are going to get heavenly food." And for confirmed members of the church who have fallen away there is no better service for 'getting back' than Holy Communion.

At the Last Supper Our Lord did three things: He took bread and wine; He blessed bread and wine; He gave bread and wine; and He commanded the disciples: "Do this: in remembrance of me;" i.e. take; bless; give. These three actions are repeated at every Communion Service. The bread and wine are 'taken' at the Offertory; they are 'blessed' at the Consecration; they are 'given' at the Communion.

The service complete is built up round the three actions. Before the first action of taking there is a general preparation of prayer, commandments, scripture in epistle and gospel, creed and sermon. Before the second and third actions of blessing and giving, there is a special preparation of invitation, confession, absolution, comfortable words, praise and humble approach. After the third action of communion there is a short thanksgiving. The pattern is simple and readily to be understood.

What was meant to be the main service for all Christians on the Lord's Day has become the privilege of the few. The quiet early morning celebration of Holy Communion has great devotional value. Place must also be found for as many Christians as possible to come together, perhaps once in the month, at the Lord's Table. There is no more powerful social witness of the Gospel than the fellowship of the Holy Communion. All are welcome; all are one. Distinctions of class and tempera-ment are done away. Man's part is to receive what God gives. There is no need which God is not able to meet.